

# ***NEWS***

*From the Offices of*



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## **County to Study Foreclosure Impacts**

*Focus to be on Public Safety, Metal Theft*

SAN BERNARDINO – San Bernardino County Supervisors Dennis Hansberger and Brad Mitzelfelt today announced their intention to study negative impacts related to the foreclosure crisis in San Bernardino County. The Board of Supervisors on April 8 will consider a proposal that would direct the Sheriff's Department, County Office of Legislative Affairs and other departments to review illegal activities and public safety threats related to vacant, foreclosed homes, and to review potential responses to those threats.

"There were more than 8,000 foreclosures in the County in 2007 and we had almost 3,300 in the first two months of 2008," said Supervisor Mitzelfelt, who represents the County's First District. "Those vacant homes present many public safety risks, including the use of the property for criminal activities, vandalism, providing an unsafe hangout for youth, and the theft of metals from the homes."

One recommendation being proposed is to strengthen local regulations related to metal theft in response to a rise in metal theft from abandoned homes. Supervisors will direct staff to review a metal theft ordinance proposed by State Assemblyman Tom Berryhill in conjunction with Assembly Bill 844. The intent would be to prepare a similar ordinance for adoption in San Bernardino County.

"Metal theft has been a significant problem in our County and vacant, foreclosed homes are providing new targets for metal thieves," said Supervisor Hansberger, who represents the County's Third District. "Addressing metal theft is even more urgent now because of the need to protect abandoned homes and prevent neighborhoods from becoming blighted."

Supervisors will direct the County Office of Legislative Affairs to review pertinent state legislation aimed at minimizing the negative impacts from vacant homes and to return to the Board with recommendations.

Upon approval of the Supervisors' agenda item, the County Administrative Office would also task County departments with reviewing other potential negative impacts related to vacant homes.